

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY JIDDA NIACT IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY SANA NIACT IMMEDIATE

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JIDDA FOR TWINAM

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, YE

SUBJECT: PRESS GUIDANCE: SITUATION IN NORTH YEMEN AND
SOUTH YEMEN

1. FOLLOWING GUIDANCE WAS PROVIDED TO DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN
FOR NOON BRIEFING TODAY. SPOKESMAN USED THIS GUIDANCE.

2. Q. WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN NORTH YEMEN?

A. FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT AHMED
AL-GHASHMI, THE YAR PARLIAMENT APPOINTED A FOUR-MAN
REPUBLICAN COUNCIL WITH FORMER SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT
ABD AL-KARIM AL-ARASHI AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL.

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-- WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FOUR-MAN COUNCIL IS AN INTERIM
ARRANGEMENT UNTIL PARLIAMENT CAN HOLD ELECTIONS FOR A NEW
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC.

-- OUR EMBASSY REPORTS THAT THE CAPITAL SANA IS QUIET AND
THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ARE SAFE.

Q. WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF THE ASSASSINATION?

A. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AN ENVOY FROM THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN (SOUTH YEMEN) WAS VISITING PRESIDENT AL-GHASHMI WHEN A BRIEFCASE IN THE ENVOY'S HAND EXPLODED KILLING THE ENVOY INSTANTLY AND MORTALLY WOUNDING PRESIDENT AL-GHASHMI. WE DO NOT HAVE ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS MATTER.

Q. AREN'T YOU SAYING THAT THE SOUTH YEMENI REGIME IS RESPONSIBLE?

A. SHORTLY FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION THE NORTH YEMENI GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THAT IT HAD SEVERED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SOUTH YEMEN. IN A STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING THIS ANNOUNCEMENT NORTH YEMEN'S FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAJ ACCUSED SOUTH YEMEN OF BEING BEHIND THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT AL-GHASHMI. NORTH YEMENI PRIME MINISTER ABDULAZIZ GHANI, WHO WILL CONTINUE AS HEAD OF GOVERNMENT, HAS ALSO BEEN NAMED TO HEAD A COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE AL-GHASHMI'S DEATH.

-- WE ALSO NOTE THAT SOUTH YEMEN HAS DENIED INVOLVEMENT IN THE KILLING.

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Q. WHAT IS THE U.S. REACTION TO THIS EVIDENCE AND WHAT EFFECT DO WE THINK IT WILL HAVE ON THE AREA?

A. IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIVING WORD OF THE ASSASSINATION AND PRIOR TO THE FORMULATION OF A NEW GOVERNMENT, SECRETARY VANCE SENT A MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE TO FOREIGN MINISTER AL-ASNAJ IN WHICH HE EXPRESSED HIS SHOCK AND SADNESS AT LEARNING OF THE TRAGIC DEATH OF PRESIDENT AL-GHASHMI UNDER SUCH BRUTAL CIRCUMSTANCES. (FULL TEXT PROVIDED BY PRESS OFFICE.)

THE SECRETARY ALSO SAID THAT HE SUPPORTS THE EFFORTS THE YAR GOVERNMENT IS MAKING IN THIS DIFFICULT PERIOD TO ASSURE THAT THE YAR CONTINUES TOWARD ITS GOALS OF DEVELOPMENT AND STABILITY.

AS HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED JOSEPH W. TWINAM OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT IS CURRENTLY IN JIDDA, SAUDI ARABIA AND WAS ENROUTE TO ADEN TO DISCUSS WITH SOUTH YEMENI OFFICIALS IN AN EXPLORATORY AND NON-COMMITTAL MANNER PROBLEMS WHICH EXIST BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS ON A VARIETY OF ISSUES. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE HAVE

INFORMED THE SOUTH YEMENI GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE BRITISH, OUR PROTECTING POWER IN ADEN, THAT WE HAVE DECIDED NOT TO SEND THE TWINAM MISSION TO ADEN AT THIS TIME.

WE HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF TWINAM'S PRESENCE IN THE AREA AND HAVE INSTRUCTED HIM TO TRAVEL TO SANA, THE NORTH YEMEN CAPITAL TO MEET WITH NORTH YEMENI LEADERS. HE WILL BE CARRYING WITH HIM A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO REPUBLICAN COUNCIL CHAIRMAN AL-ARASHI.

Q. WHAT IS GOING ON IN SOUTH YEMEN?

A. AS YOU KNOW, WE HAVE NO DIPLOMATIC MISSION THERE. WE HAVE NOTHING MORE THAN WHAT YOU HAVE SEEN IN PRESS
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REPORTS, INDICATING FIGHTING IN AND AROUND THE CAPITAL CITY.

-- WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT THERE ARE ANY AMERICANS IN SOUTH YEMEN NOW.

Q. DO WE SEE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN THE FIGHTING IN SOUTH YEMEN AND THE ASSASSINATION IN NORTH YEMEN?

A. WE HAVE SEEN PRESS SPECULATION THAT THE UPRISING IN SOUTH YEMEN IS LINKED TO THE ASSASSINATION OF NORTH YEMENI PRESIDENT AL-GHASHMI BUT HAVE NO FURTHER INFORMATION. VANCE

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